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CIA—How Far on Its Own?

Post-mortems of the abortive Cuban invasion turned up a significant number of tactical and strategic errors allegedly committed by the Central Intelligence Agency. These undoubtedly will be examined by Congress when it considers a proposal to subject this super-secret agency to Congressional supervision.

It has been asserted that the agency's past successes in foreign political undertakings gave it an air of "omniscience and omnipotence" and persuaded officials in Washington to entrust it with the training of Cuban refugees for the invasion. CIA operatives who planned the invasion were said to have kept their superiors in the dark about many aspects of the plan. It is contended that they ignored an order by President Kennedy to exclude followers of the former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista from the venture. The CIA agents reportedly were reluctant to part with well-trained rightist leaders.

Richard M. Bissell, Jr., a deputy of Allen Dulles, and Frank Bender, CIA area chief in Guatemala, placed a young Cuban named Manuel Artime, who had had little military experience, in command of the special training camps in Guatemala, where the refugee recruits were shaped into a commando force. Initially, the plan worked out by the CIA and Artime called for creation of 30 guerrilla and sabotage groups inside Cuba under orders to go into action at the moment sea and air landings were made. However, the People's Revolutionary Movement, an underground organization directed by Manuel Ray, a one-time minister of Public Works, reportedly received no support and almost no equipment. The alleged reason for CIA's reluctance to aid the only effective resistance movement in Cuba until almost the very end was that Ray and his associates were considered too radical and politically undesirable.

Apparently few officials in Washington had any idea of the training techniques of the CIA or the support given by the agency to right-wing groups. Rep. Paul G. Rogers, Florida Democrat, said in the House last year that "if it is true that the agency mapped the invasion plan, herded the Cuban resistance leaders around like red-headed step-children and conducted military operations in their stead, then we

have trusted a government agency to make all but war without the consent of Congress." Rep. William Pitt, New York Democrat, also said in the House that "apparently the CIA was operating a private foreign policy of its own."